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Urban Preparation Kit, Part I, On-Body Kit

Schwert

- Skills and guides - Bushcraft and Survival -

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Description :

Part I of this article covers the on-body kit designed to provide basic needs of shelter, warmth, water and communication in the event of an urban disaster.

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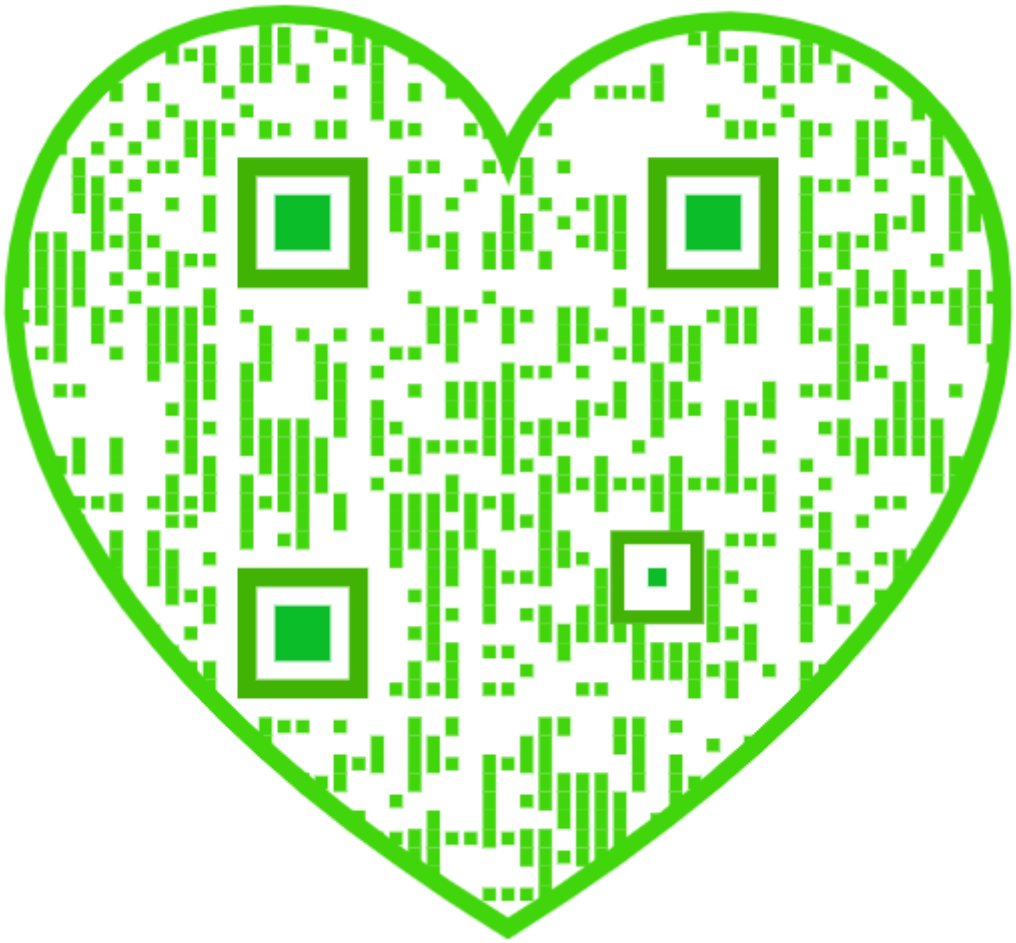

Preparation Philosophy

My preparation philosophy relies both upon a set of useful tools and a related set of skills. Basic kit is carried/worn at all times with each item chosen to meet some supposed need in a likely urban scenario. I believe in what I call my "concentric ring" approach to kits. The inner ring is the basic on-body kit, the next ring consists of a coat/hat kit and my shoulder carry bag of items, the next ring is a desk kit, followed by car and home kits. As the rings expand, the kit items become either more numerous, larger or more specialized. The on-body kit is designed to meet basic needs of shelter, water and communication plus some specialized needs likely in my workplace. The larger kits include increased communications, better shelter, more capable and complete first aid etc all the way up to the home kit which includes CERT and RACES team gear (Community Emergency Response Team, and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, more about these later). I also tend to design kits with daily use in mind....that is my kits are open to use of the items as needed, not sealed in kit boxes etc.

Urban Scenarios and Their Influence on Kit

The first exercise that I feel must be done is a review and definition of the daily risks and needs that would drive choices in pieces of kit. These evaluations are personal and highly valuable to both pick skills and gear that are appropriate but to also exclude items that have little use. For instance, many people say they carry large knives on a daily basis as emergency gear, but I always wonder if they have determined what would happen to them legally if they were stopped for some reason and these knives were found on their person. I am not saying a large knife is not good kit, I am saying it is only good kit if it does not compromise your preparations. My basic on-body kit set of tools meets all legal requirements of my location.

Local Conditions. Climate, geologic conditions, worksite location, and state and federal laws all contribute to the development of my kit. Seattle is located on a large saltwater sound about 100 miles inland from the sea, but its climate is greatly affected by the marine environment. Temperatures are mild year round, with a great number of light rain and overcast days. The metropolitan area is split East/West by a large lake, and North/South by a smaller lake and cut. Transportation around the city is difficult and dependent on several bridges. My worksite is about 20 miles from home, and across a lake, so my kit decisions are also based on my abilities by various means to get home. My worksite is across the street from a large home improvement center and it is only about 20 feet above sea level. A large volcano (Tahoma or officially Rainer) is located about 100 miles south of the city. And Seattle is built on an active earthquake fault line. Geologic evidence supports the occurrence of massive earthquakes (magnitude 9) 18 times over the past 10,000 years. State law allows knives of 4" or less carried concealed. Concealed carry of firearms is allowed with a permit. My usual commute home takes me through, or adjacent to the downtown business district.

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Seattle

Given these location specific condition, these are my urban scenarios:

Large scale natural disaster. This can be an earthquake, tsunami, lahar, strong wind or rain storms, volcanic eruption, or fire. Severity and scope of each of these natural disasters can, of course, vary greatly. In March 2001 we had a 6.8 magnitude quake centered in the Nisqually area south of Tacoma. This caused extensive damage to my worksite and the older structures in the older parts of Seattle, but caused minimal to no damage outside of these portions of the city. Large windstorms have occurred several times in the past couple of decades and caused local problems, flooding and widespread power outages. The natural disaster scenario is my largest concern. My workplace is a brick structure built over many years, and I work in the 1914 era portion. The 2001 quake caused major damage to this structure, and the building was red-tagged (occupancy not allowed for some time). Lesser events in the city cause huge traffic problems and the natural topography of the city makes it difficult to move easily from work to home. A couple of inches of snow is nearly the same as a category 4 hurricane around here.

Regional political or other disturbances. A few years ago Seattle hosted the WTO, (World Trade Organization) downtown. Protests of the WTO members eventually disintegrated into a riot with the usual conflicts between protestors and police. City streets were blocked; normal transportation options were stopped or rerouted. Some folks found themselves in a riot when they thought they were shopping. A recent Mardi Grass celebration turned into a mob with one innocent party-goer assaulted and killed. So far, none of our professional sports teams have won any major events, so we have avoided the celebration riots.

Terrorism. This scenario, while is has not added much to my various kits, it has added much to my response to various workplace occurrences. For instance, fire drills usually result in the whole building evacuating to the front parking lot...a perfect place for a large truck bomb to take out many of the occupants who evacuate to the fire alarm. I no longer stand in the middle of these folks and have attempted to get our leadership to move folks farther away in smaller groups.

For most folks living or working in larger urban setting, these 3 scenarios will probably be somewhat applicable. However, the whole point of this discussion is that each individual needs to evaluate their probable events and subsequent need for kit and skills to meet some of the expected problems.

For purposes of this discussion, I think I will probably call upon the earthquake scenario to illustrate my thinking and

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kit. Assuming I am at my worksite, my first goal will probably be to get out of my workplace building rapidly and hopefully uninjured. Second goal will be to evaluate the situation and take care of myself and coworkers as needed. Third goal will be to find out about my family and get home if possible. Fourth goal is to evaluate my ability to contribute to the community needs through my volunteer efforts.

If I was able to evacuate the building alive, one of my first goals would be to tend to my injuries and then assist others. Three immediate needs and two longer term needs are the basis of my kit decisions. Basic first aid for me and others, possible rescue of trapped people and shelter for me and others are the 3 immediate needs. These call for both skills and some tools. Communication and transportation of me home or others home or to hospitals etc are the next two areas where kit can play a role.

Part I of this article will discuss the On-Body kit and my attempts to provide for these 5 initial needs. Part II, will discuss other kits that would provide greater capabilities but that because of their bulk and nature may or may not be available depending on the scenario.

First Concentric Ring---On-Body Kit

The on-body kit is comprised of, and completely contained in the clothing chosen for daily wear. The centerpiece of my "wearable" kit is a wool vest. I have the luxury of working in a very relaxed (clothing wise) workplace and this vest very easily fits into this environment. I have developed a somewhat (to put it mildly) eccentric habit of wearing this vest daily, year-round for the past 8+ years. It has become so much a part of me that it is expected wear and its absence is now noteworthy.

This has given me much room for customization of the kit and the vest also allows concealed belt carry of certain items that would not be as easily carried without it. The on-body kit is also comprised of various items carried in my shirt and pants pockets, belt, and around my neck.

I will start with the versatile vest and its contents, then discuss the various other pieces of carryable kit and clothing. This is a system that has worked well for me but probably would be more difficult to incorporate into more formal work environments. First the vest itself is a Filson Model 8 vest, custom made in 26 oz Mackinaw wool. This vest model is available off-the-rack in a heavy cotton canvas (dry tin-cloth), but I personally find the wool vastly more desirable for comfort wear, insulation, and even style. The vest costs a bit over $100, must be custom ordered with a few weeks lead time, but it is in my opinion the finest example made.

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Filson Custom Style 8 in Wool Note: Prior to Filson repair of pocket wear.

Any number of outdoor multi-pocketed vests could be chosen, but this is the one for me. It has a full double back which results in a large "game" pocket back, two inside pockets, and four front pockets consisting of two flat cargo pockets, a divided tool pocket set and an open pocket. The vests prime advantage is that fully loaded, as described below, it does not take on the fisherman overstuffed vest look. The vest rides reasonably flat and fits in with casual wear better than any other multi-pocketed outdoor vest I have ever worn.

Seattle's weather is mild for most of the year and a wool vest works well in an office environment that is kept around 70 degrees, so I can wear this vest year round. Only on very hot days do I wear the same vest model in the canvas tin cloth. The vest itself is a major contributor to my shelter requirement for the on-body kit, but its versatility and neat manner of carrying or covering carried items is a major feature.

Back Pocket I always carry a boiled wool hat in the fall to spring months, tucked inside it is a Tacoma Mountain Rescue Tube Tent. This consists of a 9' plastic tube, which is easily carried and flat. Not exactly the best of tents or long lasting, but it does work. I sometimes also carry a pair of wool fingerless gloves that can slip over my leather gloves or be worn alone, 10' of slip-braided paracord and one large plastic trash bag (unfortunately not shown). I usually also carry a very flexible moderate gain antenna for my handheld HAM radio (more below).

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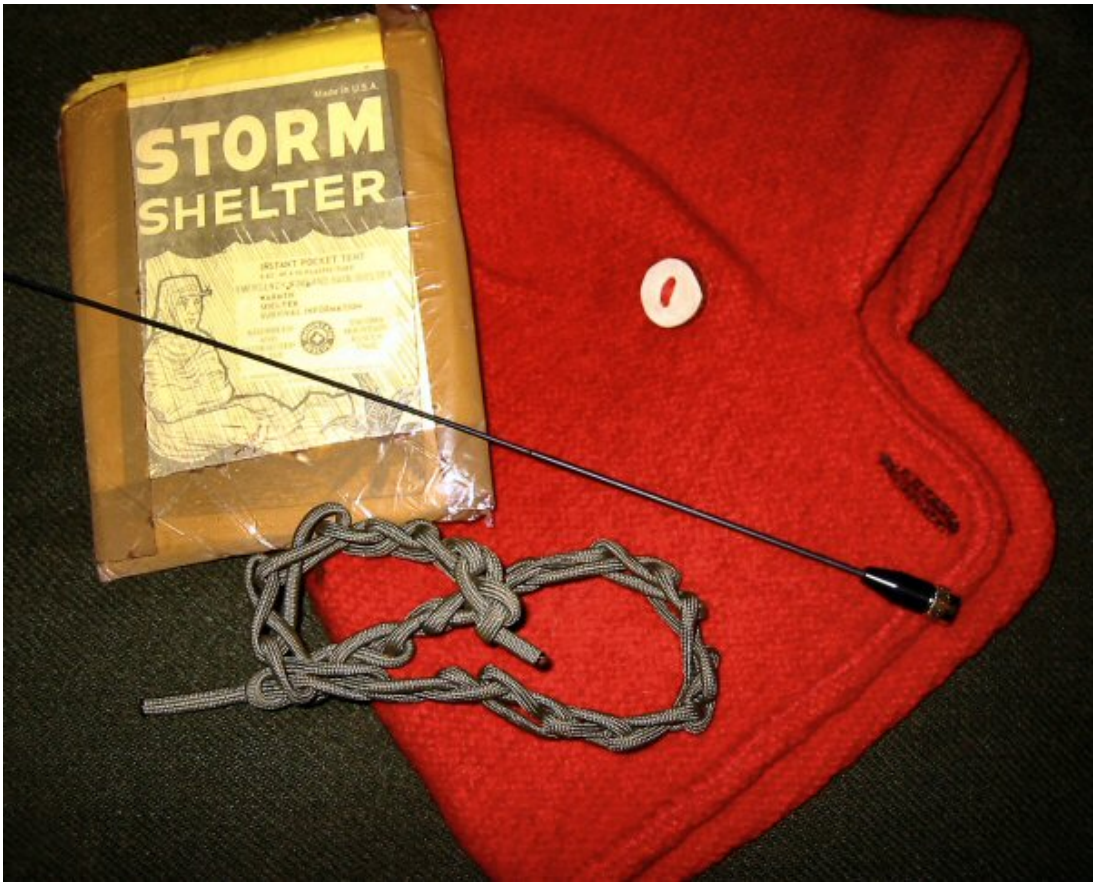
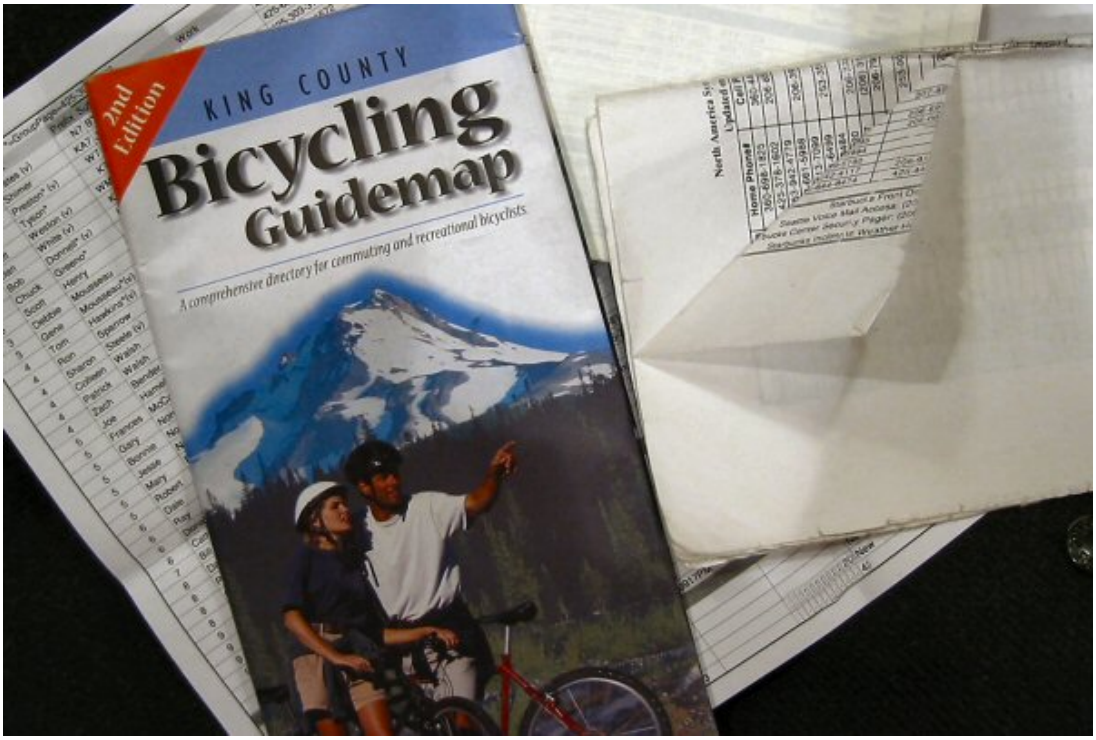


Vest, Back Pocket

Inside pocket, left Here I carry 3-4 sheets of paper with; emergency contact numbers, work mates phone numbers, neighbor's phone numbers, RACES team roster and contact numbers, and a radio frequency list. I carry a King County Bike commuter map(free and covers good walking routes over the whole county).



Vest, Inside Left

Inside pocket, right This flat pocket contains a minimal first aid packet, including 2 pair latex gloves. This is a very small kit of the usual bandages and gauze pads. I also have a 3M NIOSH N-95 Dust Mask carried in this pocket. Both are kept in small ziplock bags.

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Outside pocket, lower left This flat but slightly expandable pocket carries a 36' silk bandana, SAK (Swiss Army Knife)---(Mauser model currently but Camper model normally) and a Zipper pouch. The pouch holds a number of small items including moleskin, a heavy duty sewing repair kit (waxed nylon threads, sailmakers needles, kevlar thread), batteries (CR123A, AA, AAAA), flat ACR whistle, flat contact lens case, waterproof paper, a small hank of 2mm nylon cord (enough for the tube tent ridge line), DMT diamond stone, small wood block mounted firesteel and scraper, P-38 can opener, and Teeny nymph file.

Vest, Lower Left Pouch

The pouch, Mauser SAK and the bandana make a flat, pocket filling package.

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Vest, Lower Left with SAK

Outside pocket lower right This pocket contains a K&M Matchcase filled with strike anywhere matches and 2 needles all wrapped in a cotton bandana to prevent the hard case from wearing the wool of the vest. A GI compass pouch contains a spool of normal sewing thread, normal sewing needles in a tube, Swedish Military Firesteel and striker, Clik-Clak candy tin of Vaseline/cotton tinder, Maya wood chunk, a packet of pink wax paper tinder, 3 mL Tabasco bottle filled with lighter fluid, and a Zippo lighter wrapped in 3-4 layers of saran wrap. (Saran wrap greatly minimizes the Zippo evaporative fuel loss).

Vest, Lower Right

Outside pocket, upper left This pocket is divided into four sections, These sections contain a Small Sebenza, double ended Sharpie marker, Sure-Fire E2 light and sometimes a small Executive model SAK (carried in place of the Camper but not common now as the Camper (or Mauser) can opener is very useful at lunch). If the Executive SAK is not carried, a pair of CR123A lithium batteries can be carried in one of these sections.

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Vest, Upper Left Note: Batteries OR SAK not both

Outside pocket, upper right This large open topped pocket has been divided into 2 sections to custom fit my Calendar book. This is strictly not emergency gear but daily use gear. I have added a large Sailmakers needle to it by tying wool in the eye and slipping it into the binding. This is a highly useful way to carry a large sewing needle and thread. I also nearly always have a Streamlight Stylus LED Pen light, again not necessarily emergency gear but nice daily use gear. I have recently been carrying a Gene Ingram #4 Wharncliffe fixed blade beside the calendar book. This slot is also used for a 6x16 Minox monocular at times. This optical device is useful to observe bridges from afar to see if traffic is being allowed to cross.....the knife....well it is new and so nice I cannot leave it at home, so the optics have moved to my shoulder bag for the time being.

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Vest, Upper Right

This vest so equipped weighs in at around 5 lbs. It carries well and is relatively flat. I take pains to pack the lower pockets as flat as possible and keep the hat and tube tent flat to prevent the hunchback look. More capable shelters can be carried in the back pocket including ponchos or sil-tarps, but I have kept with the plastic tube for its minimal bulk and decent short-term capabilities.

Next we will look at the clothing and gear under the vest. While most dressing is a personal thing, a few items have been chosen to increase the functionality of the kit.

Shoes/Boots In my scenarios it is highly likely that I may have to walk home at some point. It is possible that my car, in the company parking garage will once again be off-limits after an earthquake, the roads or bridges undrivable, buses unavailable etc. Realistically I should park my car out of the garage, but my lifestyle (late to work daily) seems to preclude this. So the next best thing is a decent pair of shoes suitable for the weather; the debris; and the walking distance to home. It is also highly likely that durable shoes will be important in evacuating my worksite building should an earthquake strike. It is old construction brick and during the last earthquake most of the escape stairwells were a jumble of bricks. So given these likely scenarios, during the winter I find myself wearing my backpacking boots, a pair or Limmer Standard boots, and during the nicer parts of the year a pair or Trask Bison leather shoes with Vibram soles.

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Limmer Standard Boots Usually cleaner for work wear.

Here the individual's scenarios should play a huge role in the choice. Sandals, high heels, or other less protective footwear need to be evaluated against things like fallen bricks in the stairwell, rubble digging and a long walk home.

Sox Wool only, for both wet insulation value and comfort.

Pants About my only absolute here are four pockets. I generally wear Dockers or something similar. Certainly not the best for wet weather, but adequate most of the year, and if covered with my rain pants carried in my shoulder bag kit are decent.

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Pant Pocket, Right

Pockets contain: Bandana, Wallet with a reasonable amount of cash (discussed later), car and house keys (more later), tinder kit and BSA spark rod, MSR tool, pill fob with aspirin, Aleve, and prescription meds, coin wallet, Leatherman Micra, and my Gene Ingram Lacer knife. The Lacer knife is very flat and carries very well in my pocket. The leather laced edge makes for good grip on such a flat knife.

Pant, Left, Ingram Lacer

Belt/Radio Seems an unlikely piece to call out in a kit, but a decent solid belt to carry some items is necessary. Mine is a double thickness 1.25" cowhide Milt Sparks belt with brass buckle. I carry a pair of deerskin gloves tucked under the belt, cowboy style. These are thin minimal bulk gloves for rubble digging, which will last for at least a short while.

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Belt, Right, Gloves

A small (4" or less) fixed blade knife in a cross draw sheath can be carried on the belt under the vest and I sometimes carry a Benchmade Model 5 rescue knife. I also carry a Leatherman Juice tool, either a CS4 or XE6 model. I used to carry a Leatherman Wave, but tired of its bulk. I think a multi-tool is a very good piece of kit and a daily use piece gets the nod from me. The Juice line is lighter and fits my daily needs better than the larger versions, but each individual should evaluate their needs. Probably the most important belt carry item is my small tri-band HAM radio.

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Belt, Right, Radio, Juice

I carry a 5 watt Icom T90A handheld radio with 6m, 2m, and 70cm HAM bands. It also receives NOAA weather, AM and FM broadcast radio, and TV bands. This allows me access to my emergency communication group (RACES and CERT discussed below), and direct ability to contact my wife across town. It also allows me to check the condition of the 9 bridges crossing the lakes, listen to news reports (unreliable as they may be), access repeater phone patch (telephone calls through the repeater) and leave various messages with my fellow HAM's. Note that the antennas are carried separately, a short one in my shirt pocket and a gain antenna in my vest. Belt carry of the radio with antenna is difficult as the vest catches on the antenna.

Shirt Again my only requirement is a long-sleeved, 2 pocket sturdy shirt. I generally wear Filson shirts for their durability and comfort. Upper left pocket contains an Inova X-5 LED light, and several pens (fountain pen nut among my many other vises).

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Shirt, Left, the Office

Upper right pocket holds a moleskine notebook (unfortunatly not pictured) with several added pages of radio operation data (frequencies, phone numbers etc) and my stubby antenna for my HAM radio. I also sometimes carry a 128 Mb JumpDrive with emergency data stored on it and sometimes a Rescue Reflector 2x3" plastic mirror. The mirror is more a wilderness item than urban, but it is handy to remove my contacts if worn. The 10x magnifier is primarily a daily use item/toy not an emergency tool.

Shirt, Right

Neck At work we are required to wear visible ID cards. I have added a modified Fox 40 whistle to the breakaway neck lanyard.

In Hand I generally carry or have a 600mL Sigg aluminum water bottle at work. While this is not exactly on-body kit, it is with me more than not, so I include it here.

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Sigg Water Bottle Note upper right vest pocket repair required due to hard tool carry.

The Kit in Action

This list of stuff seems like a load, but in reality it is easy to do. My vest stays loaded, and slips on in the morning. Pocket stuff is added as I dress and I am ready. This on-body kit covers minimal shelter (clothing vest, hat, gloves, plastic bag and tent) and first aid; possibly some water; communications with my wife and emergency responders groups for several hours; no dependence on cell phone sites; whistle to signal if I am buried in rubble; high intensity and longer duration flashlights; leather gloves; fire making capabilities; basic kit repair. The kit is also functional daily. I carry my calendar, a SAK with can opener for soup, pens, flashlight, Leatherman Juice to work on my computer, knife to open boxes or coffee bags, etc so this kit is not exclusively emergency kit it is a daily work kit with added emergency materials. If I had to evacuate work with only this kit, I would be about 250% better prepared than many/all of my coworkers.

Car, House Keys and Cash. I was amazed by the number of people who left their car and house keys at their desks during the 2001 earthquake. Many also left their wallets, checkbooks, ATM cards, credit cards etc in the building. This was a huge problem both the day of the quake and for weeks afterward when the building was red tagged. I have a hidden key at my house to allow me in should I lose my keys, but my pants pocket always has my keys. Cash and coin are always carried, but the amounts are not usually as much as I would like. I think $50 is the minimum that should be carried with plenty of $1 and $5 bills and coin ($100 would be even better).

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Wallet, Bandana, Cash

My coin wallet generally contains about $6-10 worth of coin, including a few Gold Dollars. I tend to only violate this cash on-hand rule weekly or anytime I see a new knife.

My second key ring keeps a few basics at hand also. The BSA Hotspark and Bison aluminum capsule (purple) stuffed with vaseline/cotton tinder are another redundant fire kit. The Leatherman Micra has a nice pair of useful scissors to cut moleskin etc, the MSR stove tool is something I have found to be generally useful for a number of things and the pill fob keeps aspirin and daily meds handy and stable.

Flashlights/Building Escape Gear. I have listed 3 lights. One, the Stylus LED is primarily carried as a work item for daily repairs of computers, looking for junk under the desk etc. The other two, the Sure-Fire and Inova are complementary. The use the same battery types (CR123A lithium) and provide either high intensity light for escape or decent long-term light for search or while trapped. Other pieces of specific escape or search gear include the 3M dust mask, leather gloves and Fox 40 whistle. 9/11 survivors were plagued by the choking dust from the building collapse. The leather gloves are for rubble moving to escape or to rescue. Sturdy shoes are always worn for the same reason. A pair of prescription insert swim goggles is on my list, again to cope with the dust from a collapsing building. During the 2001 earthquake, as I was lying under my desk watching the light fixtures fall to the floor, I noticed a distinct and thick dust cloud, both from the fluorescent bulbs exploding and the shaking bricks. If we experience the massive earthquake expected, I do not think my worksite will remain standing. The potential is very high for being trapped at best, and squashed at the worst. Hopefully, if I am trapped the whistle and lights will facilitate rescue, and if squished at least I tried.

Shelter. The vest itself provides excellent insulation from the mild cool weather and coupled with the plastic bag as a rain cover would provide an adequate degree of warmth and protection from rain for our mild weather. The boiled wool hat is a superb example of old-technology gear. It is densely woven boiled Austrian wool with efficient ear flaps. The wool gloves, hat, vest, silk bandana and plastic bag rain cover plus the plastic tube tent with paracord should provide adequate shelter in the short term, certainly not luxury comfort but adequate given our usual climate. The Coat kit described in Part II is my primary shelter component, but since I cannot be certain of exiting with it, these items provide a reasonable degree of protection.

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Knives. For most of the readers here, carrying knives (plural) is most likely a daily thing. I have listed several in the kit above. I find a small SAK to be extremely useful for work. My Executive is perfectly acceptable and useful, but a larger Camper with saw, decent blade and can opener is a near perfect choice in my opinion. The Mauser is a new and right now gets the spot of the Camper, but any medium sized SAK with large blade and saw would fit my criteria. I nearly always carry a small fixed blade knife too. Right now this is generally one of Gene Ingram's fine pieces. Currently his flat Lacer model is my choice for pants pocket carry and his small #4 wharncliffe seems to have taken up residence in my vest in place of the monocular. The Lacer knife is my "kit" knife as it is easily carried in the vest or pocket as it is very flat and of a very useful (and legal) size.

On-Body Sharps Choices

Whatever the fixed blade choice I think it should always be legal in the on-body kit. My vest is long enough to conceal a cross draw sheath carried on my belt, but currently pocket carry of the Lacer is my preferred choice. I have sometimes carried the BenchMade Model 5 Rescue cutter on my belt, but this is primarily for seatbelt cutting and some other safety knife chores, and recently I have not been wearing it. One fixed blade is enough for the on-body kit..... but that wharncliffe is so sweet. I generally always carry a small Sebenza folder too. It answers so many needs daily from boxes to coffee bags and seems generally acceptable in a work environment. I do not consider the Leatherman Juice a knife, but it is a very useful tool for my work. The saws on the SAK and Juice are super for cutting down ornamental trees to make tarp shelters etc, and the various Juice tools would most likely be handy. With the home improvement store right next door to my worksite, I think it is likely that should we have to construct temporary shelter we could "source" tarps, lumber, rope and tools, but having a small highly effective set of these tools is one of my kit requirements. However, if pressed, I would say the Ingram Lacer and the Juice would be my absolute minimum choices.

First Aid Kit. These items are at best minimal. My vest really cannot adequately accommodate a decently large enough FAK, so unfortunately only a very basic set of gauze pads, latex gloves, and a few bandages are carried. My evacuation scenario includes removing a worksite FAK box and taking it out the building, but this again is going to be situation dependent. My shoulder bag kit contains my primary FAK...hopefully it will evacuate with me. Also the 2 bandanas will have to serve as compresses, slings, splint ties etc. Moleskin is carried specifically should the long walk home generate any heat spots on my feet.

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City Map. During times of major disruption to normal traffic patterns, (riots, damaged bridges or streets) finding an alternate route is very important. I have chosen a larger map that includes the county bike routes. Many good paths are shown that are not streets. A bus route map is also an excellent source of alternate transportation information. My wrist watch includes a compass if needed.

HAM radio, RACES and CERT. Emergency communications is a significant volunteer effort for me and my wife in our community. We are also members of our home community CERT team. Being able to directly call her on my radio after an emergency, make certain she is carrying out her preparations as preplanned is a huge weight off my shoulders. Emergency responder groups of all sorts exist all over the globe. I highly encourage individuals to determine what groups exist locally and how best to serve in them. The skills developed for communication or other community service is directly applicable to you and your family. In the 2001 earthquake we had over 2000 people standing in the parking lot most trying to call their family via cell phones. The cell sites while not damaged, could not handle the volume. I stood in the lot with my then brick sized HAM handheld and contacted my wife via phone patch from a repeater located about 15 miles North....not high tech, somewhat geeky, but it worked. Since then she has gotten her HAM license and I could call direct not even needing a repeater. We also have worked out preplanned responses to various emergencies. But communication either directly or indirectly though my emergency teams is not only possible but probable. This allows determining if various bridges are available for use by traffic or foot and getting damage assessment measures of my home city. For HAM radio to work efficiently I am a member of a couple of local repeater groups and of course practice by using these systems daily, keep my batteries charged and carry a decent antenna.

Fire Kit, Repair kit. These items probably will not play much of a role in the early aspects of an emergency, but they are small and versatile, and I cannot imagine not carrying either one of these. Spare batteries for the lights will likely be used, and they repair items may be useful after the rigors of escape or rescue from my building.

Preplanned Actions/ Contact List. My wife and I have preplanned actions that we will attempt to do in the event of an emergency. We have planned meeting places, planned places to leave notes of our actions, planned courses of action in the event that we cannot contact each other, planned message conduits. We both carry shirt pocket notebooks with these actions spelled out and our emergency contact lists, radio frequency, bus route information and other useful pieces of information. This is one of the most important aspects of the kit. Knowing what your responsibilities and what actions are likely makes working out a situation much better.

Other skills training. I have not extensively discussed the various skills that are needed to realistically use the tools carried as kit, but the skills are in many ways more important than the kit itself. Our efforts with our CERT and RACES Teams, first aid courses, communication drills have all made us more capable in dealing with the city wide emergencies. But daily or weekly skills building with the various tools are also an important aspect of the kit. Building a fire with the firesteel is both fun and instructive, sharpening knives and making fuzz sticks or shelter poles is good practice, repairing tarps or clothes, traveling different routes home, riding the bus, discussing various scenarios etc all are an essential part of the kit. My wife and I drill with our CERT and RACES groups several times a year and do weekly communication tests with them. Good tools and good skills go hand in hand. Realistic evaluation of your likely scenarios should not only develop a list of needed/wanted tools but it should also develop a list of needed skills that not only need to be learned but practiced over time.

Part II of this article will outline four of my other kits that make up the next set of rings in the "concentric circle" of kits. These will include my daily carry Shoulder bag kit, Coat Kit, Desk Kit and Car Kit. Hopefully the on-body kit would be supplemented by one or more of these more capable kits, but if not, I have tried to design a reasonably sized kit that can be carried/worn daily without thought.

Addendum. One of the best aspects of publishing this article was the comments and suggestions coming from

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readers. Not only did the original writing of the article clarify and strength some of my plans, but the excellent (for the most part) suggestions of different tools or procedures assist in my preparations.

This artice stimulate more discussion at work and I was able to convince my work team that we should meet in a hopefully safer place when we exit the building. We also moved to a more modern end of the building which may (or may not) be safer in the event of an earthquake.

I reviewed the article and found an error that was historical. I used to carry a AA cell MagLight instead of the SureFire E2 which I bought a couple of years ago. I added CR123A cells to my vest, but did not remove the AA cells. Amazingly I rotated them on schedule without really thinking about it. I carried nothing that used them except my Ham Radio which requires a cell holder. So I moved the Ham Radio AA battery pack to a leather compass case and added it to my belt. This case also holds 2 extra AA cells, so my radio operation time essentially tripled by the discovery of this AA battery oversight.

Once again I thank those readers who commented here or sent me emails with links to other gear or suggestions of other approaches....this is an evolving bit of kit.

Ham Radio AA Cell Battery Case

Please see Part II

Filson Shoulder Bag

Resources; Equipment and Training

Filson Model 8 Vest in tin cloth, custom made in wool upon request. Other coats, shirts, jackets, gloves, wool underwear, sox, sweaters are shown on the site. In my opinion some of the finest clothing made. Expensive at first but a true bargain over time. Most of my wardrobe consists of Filson garments. I highly recommend the coats discussed in Part II, the shelter cloth shirts, wool sweaters, the vest, of course, and sox. Clothing is all sewn in the US of the finest materials available.

Filson Custom orders The style 8 vest discussed above is only available in dry tin cloth off-the-rack. It can be custom ordered at a 50% premium in wool and moleskin. To duplicate my model you must request buttons on the front placket and front pockets instead of snaps (free substitution). My vest has been worn for many years and was recently repaired by Filson professionals (free) to fix worn spots where my flashlight, Sebenza, and matchcase wore through the wool. Close inspection of the various images show the repairs. I expect many more years of use in this vest.

Gene Ingram Knives, Gene offers many fixed-blade knife models, and many suitable for pocket carry. His work is superb and his prices are very good. He is also a super person to deal with, timely delivery, quick response to emails, excellent sheath work. The Lacer knife shown above represents a collaboration between Gene Ingram and myself. He designed the blade and developed the laced edge idea, I laced the leather for the handle.

Chris Reeve Knives, Sebenza, the classic hard-use folder. Highly recommended.

BenchMade Knives, Model 5 Rescue Hook knife that is easily belt carried and rapidly available. Super sharp hook for web or clothing cutting.

Leatherman Tools My favorite multi-tool line.

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Sure-Fire Lights The E2 is small but with a 60 or 120 lumen lamp is very bright. Run time is short, but this is an escape light, so bright is required.

Inova LED Lights This nicely machined package runs for a long time and is very bright with the 5 white LED's. My favorite of the larger LED lights.

Streamlight Stylus LED Light This one uses 3 AAAA batteries which are rather expensive but the run time is long and it is decently bright. I would not use this as a primary light, but it is a near perfect daily use light.

Limmer Boot and Shoes In my view, the best leather boots made. Mine are off-the-shelf Limmers NOT custom made. Expensive ($300) but considering they are all leather inside and out, can be resoled multiple times they are like Filson clothes...inexpensive over time. I was replacing my fabric/leather boots once a year at $50-100 a crack so these have nearly paid for themselves and I am still on my first soles.

Rescue Reflectors Mirrors are simply the best signal mirrors I have ever seen. Malcom Murray is super to deal with and makes several hand tuned mirrors for many purposes. The light plastic 2x3" mirror I carry is exceptionally easy to use, very bright and focused, and light weight. I find myself carrying it daily because it is an exceptional and versatile piece of kit. These mirrors are well worth the slight extra cost.

Icom Radios, T90a This handheld triband amateur radio is about the size of a pack of cigarettes and carries easily on my belt. It has 5w power output with a decent antenna and works very well in Seattle and the area around.

CERT, Community Emergency Response Teams are an interesting collaboration between your local emergency responders (fire dept usually), and FEMA. Communities tend to support this training very differently. I highly recommend the training, even though it is basic and broad. This site has lists of cities that offer the training. The two best things about the training are: you get to know your emergency responders and you get to know some members in the community that want to help. Next best thing is that you can get semi-interested family members talking about important aspects of their behavior in the event of an emergency. For instance, if you have kids in school and there is an earthquake what will the school do? What will you do? How will you do it? There are literally hundreds of basic questions that need to be addressed in a family and CERT training can spark the discussion.

RACES, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service is a FCC regulated service for HAM operators. RACES groups are always chartered in the local area to serve the community. These are well worth seeking out even if you are not a HAM operator.

ARRL, Amateur Radio Relay League, I recommend anyone who is serious about personal preparedness to seek out local HAM groups, get your license and serve the community. Your best communication opportunities many times are phone lines, but in some events these are not available, HAM radio can fill the bill and serve the community. The ARRL is a vast source of information on local clubs, testing etc.

Proceed to Part II

Post-scriptum :

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ver 2.0 12/22/2004, Linked to Part II and minor edits plus an addendum added

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